

WATERBURY, CONN.

REPUBLICAN

m. 24,059

s. 50,455

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DEC 8 1964

Date:

One Revolution Needed

Americans are wary of revolutions abroad (at least those not influenced by the CIA), but there is one in this hemisphere that could use moral support.

Ideologically the United States is opposed to all forms of dictatorship, whether of the left or right, but, in the absence of choice, Realpolitik compels us to deal with whatever regime holds power.

We can, however, influence the internal decisions of other nations, although we officially deny it. Yet our amiability in the past with iron-fisted dictators in Latin America leads the uncommitted world to believe our anxiety is stirred only by left-of-center movements.

Revolution in Haiti is long overdue. The political terrorism and repression of President Francois Duvalier is tolerated there perhaps because little other form of government has been known, and the ignorance and poverty of the all-Negro, French-speaking country prohibits mass communication and action.

The United States should show concern with the totalitarianism in Haiti at least proportionate to our concern with communism in Cuba. A handful of rebels have had no success against the Duvalier dictatorship, but it stands to reason that if

another country decided to encourage, arm, and equip the revolutionaries that country would also have a voice in what type of government replaced the old. What should surprise us is that outside assistance has not yet been given.

Economically, Haiti is described as in a state of near disaster. Except for the tourist mecca of Port-au-Prince, this has always been its condition. And the United States has done precious little, either economically or politically, to make Haiti a respectable member of the family of American nations.

This is all the more regrettable and culpable because the United States in the past, after seizing control of Haiti, introduced no lasting democratic institutions. President Wilson sent U. S. troops to Haiti in 1915, after nearly five years of bloodshed there. And the U. S. government didn't see fit to withdraw from Haiti until 1934.

It may be assumed by some that President Duvalier, by voodoo and terrorism, will stay in power until succeeded by another strong man. But as backward as Haiti is, the country is subject to outside influences, and sooner or later the State Department will have to decide whose influence will be the guiding one, even in revolution.